



MR. PUNCH'S PAGEANT IS NOW ON VIEW AT THE LEICESTER GALLERIES, LEICESTER SQUARE.

A LEAP-YEAR LAMENT.

So the Old Year is done,
And let me add
The fact that I, for one,
Am jolly glad.

This was the kind of year
I used to laud,
But it has proved, I fear,
A beastly fraud.

I'm disappointed; yes,
I find myself
In single cursedness
Upon the shelf.
O ladies, why so coy
At such a time?
I am no callow boy,
But in my prime;
Not beautiful ('tis true),
But kind and good,

Points which I fancied you
Quite understood.
Yet, though my charms have been
Fully disclosed,
As all of you have seen,
Not one's proposed.
Still, feeling (as I ought)
Extremely vexed,
There's comfort in the thought
It's my turn next.

A GUIDE TO POPULAR EMOTION.

[“Perspective is everything when it comes to a question of news; and the newspaper takes the accurate view of the interest of its readers. . . . If you count interest by space you will find that nearly every paper divided its space equally between the seismic horror (which was in Italy) and the snow sprinkle (which was at our door).”—“The Office Window,” *Daily Chronicle*.

Ah! what it is to have a *flair*
For things that touch the vital part!
To put your thumb (and hold it there)
Upon the people's pulsing heart!
To scent the truths that pay you best,
To plumb the common mind of men so
That this you know should be compressed
And that be printed in *extenso*.

Yonder, by Italy's lovely shores,
Nature takes on her ravening mood;
Earth rocks, and Ocean bursts his doors—
The strand with myriad deaths is strewn;
A world in mourning shares the blow,
Since grief like this draws hearts together;
And yet, it seems, our papers show
An equal interest in the weather.

From where “The Office Window” shines
We get these large perspective views,
That sense of values which assigns
Its native worth to local news;
There, flood and flame and ruining walls,
Horrors from which the numb brain flinches,
Are balanced here by snow that falls
Reaching a depth of several inches!

Yet when I scan my daily sheet
I sometimes doubt if what one reads
Reflects in superficial feet
The average person's mental needs;
If area represents our taste,
What of the speeches, stupid, solemn,
That through the Session run to waste
In weary column after column?

Nor does it move me much to hear
Just how a blizzard, blowing keen,
Dammed up a locomotive near
The environs of Aberdeen;
’Tis not demand controls supply;
Petty or poignant, grave or silly,
“This is the stuff you want,” they cry,
And one must take it, willy-nilly.

O. S.

“Even the London County Council was remembered with gratitude, as the electric cars, crowded though they were, conveyed City people homeward.”—*The Daily Telegraph*.

The italics are ours—to emphasise the Great Thought embedded in this paragraph. It is really wonderful how seldom these electric cars stop to consider how many people they have inside.

“Nearly the whole of England and Wales, if it could have been seen from a balloon, would have been snow-covered.”

The Daily Telegraph.

Even as it was, with nobody looking at it from a balloon, quite a large part of the country was under snow.

Sir HENRY COTTON has said in *The New Age* that the partition of Bengal was “the greatest blunder that had been committed in India since CLIVE won Plassey.” If CLIVE's victory at Plassey was not exactly a blunder we can quite understand that Sir HENRY regards it as a very unfortunate occurrence.

OUR CHRISTMAS PUDDING.

DEAR Mr. Punch,—I have been reading your tragedy-comedy about the charms in the plum pudding, and feel particularly sympathetic because something of the same kind very nearly wrecked my own happiness on Christmas Day. Fortunately the issue was a triumph of mind over matter—or perhaps I ought to say love over loathing. It happened like this. We had just arrived at the pudding stage, and I felt it was the moment of my life, and Lizzie, our maid, felt it was the moment of hers, as she bore it to the table in triumph, and I could see she'd been having a grim struggle in getting it out of the saucepan, for her face was post-office red, and she had forgotten to turn her sleeves down. Personally, I had never made a Christmas pudding before, as I have only just begun to keep house for my brother Harry, and I could see *he* looked a bit anxious, for we had already had one or two trifling failures.

Mr. and Mrs. Bostock and Dick Barry were dining with us, not that I care for the Bostocks a bit, but I wanted to please them because they can be useful to Harry; but I do care for Dick, and I particularly wanted him to see how domesticated I was, because—well, every woman will know why. The pudding certainly looked a picture, its rich brown complexion showing a vivid contrast to the red holly berries that crowned it, and in its firm yet spongy interior I had hidden the usual mascots—a threepenny-bit for riches, a wedding ring for marriage, and a thimble for spinsterhood. I managed to give Mr. Bostock the slice with the threepenny-bit in it, and he was delighted at the attainment of more riches; but at the second mouthful I noticed a queer expression cross his face, as he helped himself again to brandy sauce and passed it significantly across to his wife. An eloquent silence fell upon us, till Harry began talking eagerly about the Budget; but even if I had been interested I couldn't have joined in, for I was too occupied with wondering what it could be that made the pudding taste of camphor. The eggs were all right, I knew, so was the fruit and the suet, and I had just determined that Lizzie must have used a lump of camphor instead of soda in washing the forks, when Mrs. Bostock gave a startled ejaculation and stared at something on her plate. Everybody stopped eating with wonderful willingness.

“What is it, Mrs. Bostock?” I exclaimed.

“You ought to know that best,” said Harry, hooking up the offending object on his fork. It was a soft, whitish thing, and looked like a flabby capsule of sodden paper.

“Why, it's *only* the thimble,” I exclaimed, much relieved.

“The thimble!” they all cried, incredulously.

“Yes,” I replied. “I couldn't find my silver one, so I put in Lizzie's. It was made of celluloid, and I expect the—*goodness* has all boiled out of it.”

“Good Heavens! We're poisoned,” groaned Mrs. Bostock.

Harry turned on me with a face like a thunder-cloud.

“You must be *mad*,” he said. “I thought you had more sense. No wonder the beastly stuff tasted of camphor.”

“Camphor, indeed!” exclaimed Mr. Bostock. “Do you know, young lady, that celluloid contains nitric and sulphuric acid and chloride of lime?”

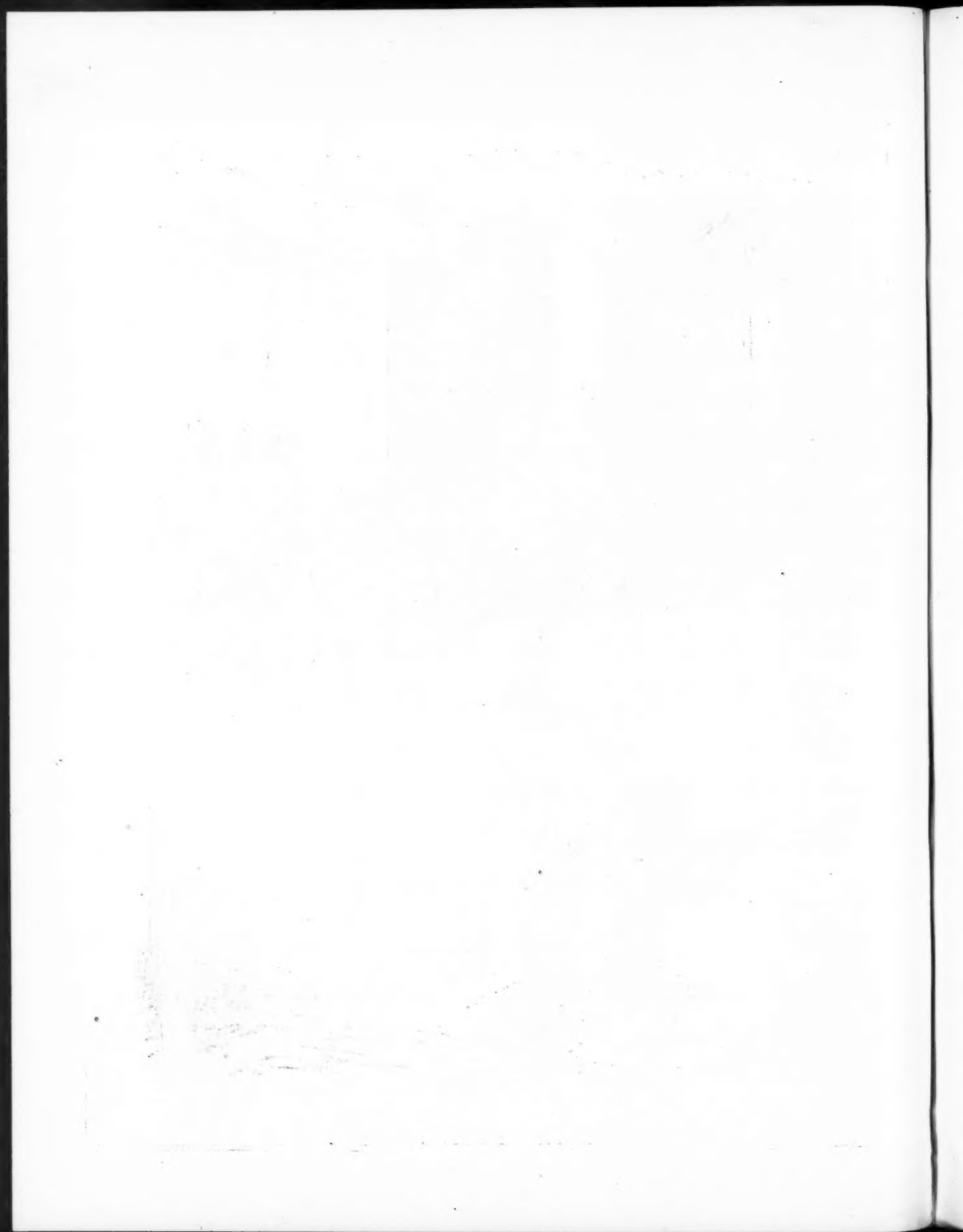
I shook my head. If I'd tried to speak I should have burst out crying. As it was, my eyes were full of tears.

“All excellent things for the system when taken in



Bernard Partridge.

THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT.





HEREDITARY INSTINCT.

Suffragette Mother (snatching a spare moment from really important things to visit the nursery). "BUT, MY DEAR CHILD, WHAT ARE YOU CRYING FOR, WITH ALL THESE NICE TOYS? WHAT CAN YOU WANT?" Infant. "Boo-hoo! I WANT A VOTE!"

small quantities," said Dick Barry. "It's the best pudding I've ever tasted, Miss Mabel. May I have some more, please?"

And, in spite of all they could say to dissuade him, he had another slice, and nobly ate every bit, and if Mr. CARNEGIE knew about it I believe he'd give him some Hero-money. As it was, he only got the wedding-ring; and when, after the Bostocks had gone, and we had been engaged about seven minutes, he asked Harry if he would trust my life to him, Harry replied—

"Certainly, if you'll trust yours to her." Which showed that the nitric acid and chloride of lime were still rankling. Yours sincerely, MABEL GREEN.

"WILLETT, WILLIAM, builder of fine modern houses; famous as the inventor of the method of saving daylight, embodied in the Bill of 1908; blessed, but not yet adopted by Parliament."

The Daily Mail Year Book.

We advise Mr. WILLETT, whatever other structures he erects, not to build too much on the last clause of this sentence. If Parliament refused to adopt him while the Bill for feeding school children was under discussion, there is not likely to be another chance for some time. However, he has been blessed, which is something.

A *poitrinaire*, who has been in his time too much sounded by the medical profession, suggests that the new year, nineteen-nine, should be known as the *Annus pulmonarius*.

CONSOLATION.

YES, there's no doubt who it is—though perhaps it seems strange to you

How the fleet years should so graciously alter your look;

Hardly you'd guessed that Time's fingers could make such a change to you,

Save for the Horror that smirks from that photograph book.

Look at that waistcoat—suggestive of round-the-town roystering;

Look at your manner in ties and your beast of a hat; Look at yourself as you seemed, in the halcyon champagne-and-oystering

Days of your youth, when you went about vested like that!

Do you at times get a longing for lost juvenility?

Do you, from peaceful backwaters of forty or so, Hanker for days when, assured of a wondrous ability,

You were to lead all the world in the way it should go?

Well, if you do, and the heyday of youth comes and cries to you,

Cries of old days ere the silver cord stretched and grew thin,—

Turn to your Aunt's book of photos, for that is my soundest advice to you;

See what you looked in the 'eighties—and find Consolation therein!

1908.

LOOKING back on the past year I can see that it has been (as usual) one of noble endeavour; frequently frustrated, but invariably well-meant. In accordance with the custom of the newspapers I have set down here its record of achievement in the different provinces of Art, Bicycling, and the like; and I offer this to the public in full confidence of their sympathy and appreciation.

Art.

We have had our photograph taken for the first time for many years, and if the result isn't Art I don't know what is. The photographer said: "Would you like them *en silhouette* or straight-fronted?" We said in French that we had thought of *cartes de visite*. The result is a sort of three-quarter face with one wing forward, and the man insists that we must have looked like that once. The only other achievement in the world of Art is a moleskin waistcoat of some distinction. I had no idea that moles were that colour, but the man swore that when you had taken the feathers out of them you found quite a different coloured skin underneath. As he has been there and I haven't, I cannot argue with him. Altogether a good year for Art.

Bicycling.

At the beginning of the year our eldest brother sold our bicycle for a sovereign and gave the sovereign to our second brother. A bad year for Bicycling, therefore.

Science.

(I thought for the moment Science began with a C, which is why it comes in here.)

Several important discoveries have been made in 1908. For instance, the small white raspberries in tapioca pudding are *meant* to be there; you always thought that they had got in from some other dish, when the cook wasn't looking. And when your watch gains a foot you don't put the regulator to A because it is advancing, but to R because you want to retard it. (Or else the other way round—I have forgotten again. Anyhow, I found out that I had been doing it wrong.) Another discovery made in the early part of the year was the meaning of the phrase "Bank Rate Unchanged," but that is too technical to explain here. A record year for Science.

Education.

1908 has not been wholly barren. We have learnt where Bosnia is.

Finance.

The old system of keeping no accounts and never filling in the counterfoils of cheques again answered admirably.

Games.

The past year marks an epoch in the history of Games. We have retired from football and are not the cricketer we were; but, on the other hand, we have made immense strides in croquet. We improve slowly at billiards. In November we potted the red rather neatly, and everybody said, "There's no getting away from that—he *must* have meant it." As a matter of fact but it would spoil it to explain. In the early part of the year we could have shown you a trick or two in Diabolo. During October we issued challenges to GOTT and BURNS—"£10,000 to the nearest relative, win, lose or tie," but luckily they were not accepted. That is all, except that I can no longer jump the ancestral herbaceous border, as the gardener keeps on discovering.

Hydrostatics.

ARCHIMEDES' Principle—that if a heavy body gets into a cold bath quickly an equal amount of water gets out on to the mat quickly—was demonstrated daily, to the complete dissatisfaction of the man on the floor below, who, however, made a still more important discovery in this interesting branch of Dynamics: viz., that water does not find its own level, but prefers something about ten feet lower down.

Indigo.

Indigo has maintained its *status quo* throughout 1908. There have been occasions during the year when we had almost decided to be an Indigo planter in Assam rather than stick it in this beastly country. On each occasion the weather cleared just before we had packed the sandwiches.

Music.

Space and time alike fail us to tell of our notable triumphs upon the pianola in the year that has just elapsed. We have played the *Sonata Appassionata* and *Slugging Jasper* with equal *verve* and *chiaroscuro*. The fruitiness and nutty flavour of our rendering of *Remorse*—Valse Tzigane, No. L192,999, kindly return by the end of the month—will never be forgotten. In July one of the black notes stuck down and refused to budge for some time; but we got it up at last with the potted-meat opener. I say, I don't think much of LISZT. He has pace and staying power and is a good strider; quite a useful man over timber he might be; but he is a little lacking in—what shall I say? *Adagio con molto espressione ma non troppo*, if you know what I mean.

Pets.

Walter, the white mouse, perished in May. The doctor said it was too much exercise on an empty—well, he put it

rather crudely. You know what doctors are. And you know how white mice *will* exercise. The tailor said Walter was too small to make up into a white waistcoat, even an evening one, and that he would be hopeless as a tie. I advertised for a white mole, but they seem to be rare. Altogether 1908 was a sad year for pets.

Thought.

Perhaps the past year was above all a year for Thought. To the pursuit of Thought we devoted many afternoons in many positions. Some people would find it impossible to think properly in one of those hard, wooden office chairs with the corrugated backs, but 1908 proved that the impossible could be achieved—that one could be as busy in these as elsewhere.

Xylonite.

We did not do any of this.

Yclept.

We were yclept every morning punctually at 8 (and arose punctually at 9.30) throughout the year.

Zeugma.

I suppose you thought I couldn't do X. Y. Z. Well, this is just to show you. In the ordinary way, of course, I should have referred to the zeugma under Music. We ordered a low-strung one last month, but it has not yet been delivered.

So much for my record of the past year. Reading it over on this first early morning of the New Year, I feel that I have not spent the twelvemonth in vain. At the end of it I can say truthfully that I am, if not a year wiser, at least a year older, a year fatter. And now, as it is just two o'clock, I will start the New Year well by carrying out my first resolution—that of going to bed *early*.

A. A. M.

"The spacious days of Elizabeth, when the Englishman, half explorer, half warrior, half freebooter, half patriot, ruled the Spanish Main."

From *T. P.'s Weekly*, which is publishing a series of articles on "Literary Taste and How to Form it."

"In accordance with his annual custom, an unknown benefactor walked into the cashier's office of the Church Army last week, handed over a cheque for £500, and left without waiting for thanks."

As great quantities of this parasite are in demand at this season, a word or two from the 'Garden' as to how to, &c., &c.

Western Daily Press.

Our own comment would have been that the signature on the cheque might have given a clue to the benefactor's identity.

DONT'S FOR DÉBUTANTES.

III.—THE ETIQUETTE OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE.



REMEMBER THAT IF YOU ARE YOUNG AND UNMARRIED YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE OVERLOOKED; SO MAKE YOURSELF NOTICEABLE FROM THE FIRST. DON'T COME BY ANY TRAIN SUGGESTED TO YOU BY YOUR HOSTESS—ARRIVE AT SOME UNUSUAL HOUR. ABOUT 7.59 (IF THE DINNER-HOUR IS 8) WOULD BE RATHER EFFECTIVE.



DON'T LET THE MEN IMAGINE THAT THE BILLIARD-ROOM IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR THEIR USE, AND THAT WOMEN SHOULD PLAY BY INVITATION ONLY. DON'T PRETEND AN INTEREST IN THE ORDINARY GAME IF YOU DO NOT FEEL IT. A COMBINATION OF BILLIARDS AND HOCKEY IS FOUND BY MANY PEOPLE MORE AMUSING, AND IS CONSIDERABLY EASIER TO LEARN.



DON'T BE FORMAL OR STILTED IN YOUR LANGUAGE. THUS, SHOULD YOU COLLIDE WITH ANOTHER GUEST ON THE STAIRS, DON'T ON ANY ACCOUNT SAY "PARDON ME" UNLESS YOU WISH TO BE MISTAKEN FOR AN AMERICAN. SAY "SORRY, OLD CHAP," UNLESS THE GUEST SHOULD HAPPEN TO SPEAK FIRST, IN WHICH CASE SIMPLY SAY "NAUGHTY!"



ABOVE ALL, DON'T BE SHY. IF YOU SHOULD CONTEMPLATE TAKING A BATH, AND FIND THE ROOM ENGAGED, DON'T SCUTTLE BACK TO YOUR BED-ROOM AND PERHAPS ALLOW A SECOND PERSON TO GET A BATH BEFORE YOU—SIT DOWN OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

SERIALS FOR ALL.

IV.

OUR next specimen is from *The Athenæum*. Its title is

IRENE'S ERROR,
A STUDY IN REPARATION.

Principal Characters:

WELRED RUSSELL, a patient compiler.

IDA, his daughter.

MARTIN CUTTER, a reviewer.

IRENE PANKSNAY, a female novelist.

MOSTYN DASENT, a male novelist.

O'DECIMO, a publisher (known as the Jew O'Decimo).

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Welred Russell, having just completed his *magnum opus* on the protective colouring of postage stamps, goes off to Broadstairs for a week's rest before he begins a new work. He takes the MS. with him to number the pages. While he sits on the esplanade with his daughter, she attracts the attention of O'Decimo, who also is staying there, and he determines to marry her. He therefore contrives a *rencontre* with her father, whose name he knows, and by gross flattery wins his way into Russell's heart. Russell improves the occasion by tendering his MS. for publication, and the Jew O'Decimo is so enamoured that he not only takes it, but offers £100 on account of a 15 per cent. royalty, thirteen to count as twelve, which are better terms than Russell had ever received before. The only condition is that Miss Russell shall bring the proofs every day as they are read to the office. Miss Russell, who meanwhile is secretly engaged to Martin Cutter, a reviewer, temporarily agrees, as she knows it is her father's only chance of getting his book published.

O'Decimo therefore goes off with the MS., and puts it in his safe. It happens that he has there also the last new novels by Miss Irene Panksnay, *What of the Night?* and Mostyn Dasent, her great rival, *The Redness of the Rose*. It happens also that Miss Panksnay, goaded to fury by the success of her rival, and properly indignant at the deplorable tone of some of his purpler patches, has determined to break into O'Decimo's premises and steal and destroy Mostyn Dasent's new MS.

Armed with a skeleton key, she does so, opens the safe, abstracts what she thinks to be *The Redness of the Rose*, and, hurrying with it to Waterloo Bridge, drops it into the Thames. She has now just discovered that it was not *The Redness of the Rose*, but Mr. Russell's treatise on the protective colouring of postage stamps.

CHAPTER VII.

Irene staggered across the room in a state bordering on mania.

She looked again at the paper, and again read the fatal paragraph:—

Broken into by burglars last night, the safe of Mr. O'Decimo, the well-known publisher, was robbed of a valuable manuscript of that rising author, Mr. Welred Russell. This work, which had occupied Mr. Russell for many years, dealt in the most exhaustive and fascinating way with that alluring theme, the protective colouring of postage stamps. That it should have excited the cupidity of the thief is therefore not surprising; but that the world should lose it is a matter of the gravest import. Mr. O'Decimo has offered a reward of £100 to anyone returning it to him and no questions asked.

Irene was in despair. What should she do? She was a humane and just woman, and her one idea, she repeated to herself, had been to deprive the reading public of a book which she honestly believed to be a danger. And in her foolish haste she had taken away and destroyed the harmless work of a deserving author.

Destroyed?

But had she? How long would it need for Thames water and Thames mud to obliterate and ruin a closely-packed manuscript? Some days surely. There was time even now to dive or dredge.

She started impulsively for the bell, but almost immediately checked herself. Of what use to dive and dredge? It could not be done in private, and to do it publicly would be to brand her deed—her jealousy?

No, rather must she keep her secret, and by all the means in her power make reparation to the unfortunate Welred Russell, the author.

Having thus decided, Irene pressed the electric button.

It was answered by a page. (According to Mostyn Dasent's quip, this was the best page of all her many thousands.)

"Get me the Post Office Directory," she said in the beautiful silver tones that had enchanted so many bazaar audiences.

The boy returned almost in the twinkling of an eye.

Irene fluttered the pages breathlessly till she came to Russell. She looked down the list—

Russell, Charles
Russell, G. W. E.
Russell, T. W.
Russell, Welred

Ah, there it was. She hastily committed the address to her ivory tablet and bade the page blow three times for a taxi.

"It's only once now," said the boy.

"Of course," she said. "How foolish of me! But I am all unstrung."

In a few moments the taxi was at the door and she was on her way to 131, Bloomsbury Street, Welred's address; only, however, to learn that the family was at Broadstairs.

"To Broadstairs!" she cried to the taxi driver.

"Impossible, madam," said he. "I have neither the petrol nor the pluck."

"Then drive me to Charing Cross," she replied.

V.

Another example is a chapter from the vivid romance now running in *The Tailor and Cutter*:—

LORD SELVAGE'S FOLLY.

Principal Characters:

LADY ANGOLA LAPEL, eldest daughter of Lord Kerseymere.

LORD SELVAGE OF CASHMERE, an eccentric millionaire.

SIR WHITE WESTCOTT, a dandy.

THE MARQUIS OF GABERDINE.

PRINCE SERGE DE VICUNA.

MR. and MRS. HOME SPUNNER.

ASTRA CANN, an adventuress.

BHAGGINIS, an unprincipled Oriental, Lord Selvage's evil genius.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Lord Selvage, a wealthy nobleman of great goodness of heart but deplorable taste in dress, has bet his friend, Sir White Westcott, £10,000 that within three months he will be the accepted suitor of Lady Angola Lapel, the reigning *débütante* of the season. Lady Angola, on her side, has promised her father, Lord Kerseymere, that she will never wed a man who wears ready-made clothes. But she is strangely fascinated by Lord Selvage's personal magnetism, and, torn in two between love and duty, begs for a week in which to consider his proposal, and promises to give him an answer at Lord's on the day of the Varsity Match, which happens to be the last day of the three months specified in the wager.

CHAPTER XI.

Lord's on the day of the University Match—a brilliant summer day, when the most *recherché* efforts of Nature were equalled and eclipsed by the triumphs of sartorial art. On all sides one saw the cream of England's womanhood faultlessly gowned, and the fine flower of England's youth tastefully garbed in the height of fashion. It was the luncheon interval, and brave men and dainty women were refreshing themselves, after the strain of two hours' attentive observation, with choice comestibles and sparkling beverages.

Admirably placed, Lord Kerseymere's drag, crowded with a bevy of Society celebrities, attracted universal attention, and Lady Angola Lapel, in a wonderful tailor-made confection, was the cynosure of every eye. But the proud beauty wore a far-away, *distracte* air, and paid but little heed to the gay badinage of Lord Harris Tweedie and Prince Serge

de Vicuna. Nor was her anxiety unnatural, for this was the day and the hour on which she had promised to give a decisive answer to the most opulent of her myriad suitors—Lord Selvage of Cashmere. His generosity was a by-word, but so was his wardrobe. Dressed at times in the height of fashion, he would at others flout the decalogue of Mode by appearing in ready-made suits of the most deplorable cut and pattern.

Suddenly a tremor ran through the vast assemblage. A strange figure was seen approaching the drag. He wore brown boots with black spats, blue flannel trousers, a grey frock coat tightly buttoned across his chest, and—crowning horror—an American grass straw hat. Strong men fainted and delicate women shrieked as he remorselessly pushed his way towards the drag. Alone Lady Angola retained her self-possession, though her features were drawn with agony; and as Lord Selvage—for it was he—raised his infamous headgear and gazed with fond inquiry full in the face of his *inamorata*, she hissed out the single word "No" in a thrilling whisper, and Lord Selvage fell prostrate on the emerald sward.

There was no more cricket at Lord's that day. The news spread with lightning speed to the pavilion, and the rival Blues, by a unanimous vote, resolved to cancel a fixture which had been so horribly desecrated.

VI.

Lastly, we may conclude with a severely condensed extract from the remarkable psychological serial which is appearing exclusively in *The Westminster Gazette*:—

THE EGG DANCER.

By ALFRED JAMES and HENRY BAGSHOT.

Principal Characters:

ARTHUR BELPER, a philosophical statesman.

MRS. SPANGLER, an American journalist.

HILARY BOLLAND, an ex-diplomatist.

JONAH BRUMFIT, an Imperialist politician.

ANNICE WORPLE, an Eurasian egg-dancer.

LORD HARDINGER, a Tory Democrat.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Arthur Belper, a Conservative statesman deeply addicted to psychological research, has developed a style so cryptic and complicated that none of his supporters are able to fathom his meaning or intentions. After patiently enduring his masterly ambiguities for several years, they grow restive and resort to the plan of employing Mrs. Spangler, an American interviewer and accomplished hypnotist, to elicit a comprehensible eirenicon from Belper which will satisfy the conflicting demands of the various sections of his Party. The preliminary negotiations occupy Chapters



A DETERMINED OPTIMIST.

"WELL, THERE'S ONE GOOD THING ABOUT THIS 'ERE WEATHER, CHAWLIE, THE FLIES DON'T BOTHER YER."

I.—XXXVIII., as the result of which Belper consents to discuss with Mrs. Spangler the basic principles of Psycho-Pragmatism, as applied to the re-organisation of the Primrose League.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The great fact, all the while, however, admittedly, had been his incalculability, since he had "supposed" himself, from decade to decade, to be allowing, and in the most liberal and intelligent manner, for the exigencies of political evolution. [Five pages are here omitted, containing 8,000 commas, 7,000 qualifying adverbs, and 16,000 other kinds of words.]

They entered the office together, our young lady and Belper, with a dim consciousness of impending calamity, he, characteristically, admitting himself with his key. [Fifteen pages are here omitted,

describing the silence in which Belper and Mrs. Spangler ascended the lift to the first floor.]

"I believe in the flower," she broke out. "I feel that it would have been quite splendid—quite huge and immeasurable."

"So you had the idea of *this*—?"

"Of what?" she quavered.

"Well—of what has happened!"

"But has anything ever 'happened'?" I believed at least you'd have persisted if he had known that both of us had, so to speak, come to ourselves, that is—"

"Then you went so far as to hint—"

"'Far' is not the word. I don't say they love him better," she granted tremulously after a luminous pause; "but he is grim and worn, and with his great clumsy monocle he does not compare with your adorable pince-nez."



OUTPOSTS.

Officer. "NOW SUPPOSING THE PATROL SENT OUT DIDN'T RETURN AT THE PROPER TIME—WHAT WOULD YOU DO?"
 Corporal (after much thought). "SELL THEIR KIT, SIR."

THE MODERN DRAMATIST TO HIS MUSE.

TEN years ago they used to say
 "SARDOU 's the drama's hope." But he
 who
 Desires to fill the stage to-day
 Should write his plays like M. BRIEUX.
 Denounce Peer, Plutocrat and Priest,
 Rich man and poor man, saint and
 sinner,
 Dives dyspeptic at his feast,
 And Lazarus without his dianer;
 Set up the pulpit on the stage—
 The dramatist secure inside it
 Thumping his cushion in a rage.
 That is the modern mode. I tried it.
 Untempted by the golden lure
 Of popular appreciation,
 I only lusted to secure
 A small attentive congregation.
 Later, I said, a larger throng
 Will gather round me as a teacher.
 I only need to pitch it strong,
 Like Father VAUGHAN, that moving
 preacher,

Till finally my fame shall spread
 So wide that, though my coat is shabby,
 When I am comfortably dead,
 They'll lay me snugly in the Abbey.

So, scorning critics' blame or praise
 (Since critics always think it funny
 That anybody writing plays
 Should write for anything but money),

I set all thought of pelf aside,
 And even, while I could, extracted
 A certain melancholy pride
 From ranking with the Great Unacted.

An audience, fit but few, said I,
 A leading man on half his salary,
 Acting he knows not what or why
 To a half-empty pit and gallery,—

That is the most I hope at first,
 One of those orgies on a Sunday
 Where censored masterpieces burst
 Like bombshells upon Mrs. Grundy.

I can't pretend to hope that I
 Shall rouse the interest BARKER rouses
 When even Mr. GALSWORTHY
 Plays to such very empty houses,

But still the drama's vogue is far,
 Yes, very far from being ended,
 While Mr. SUTRO's motor-car
 Costs such a lot and looks so splendid.

Such was my young ambition's dream.
 But flee ambition, oh, my brothers!
 Ignore her *ignis fatuus* gleam
 And realise — with MAUGHAM and
 others—

'Tis better far to win the bays,
 The gilded bays, of popularity
 Than spend your days in writing plays
 For one performance at a charity.

So I will bow in Rimmon's House,
 And with my fellows make obeisance,
 And nothing any more shall rouse
 My pursy soul from its complacency.

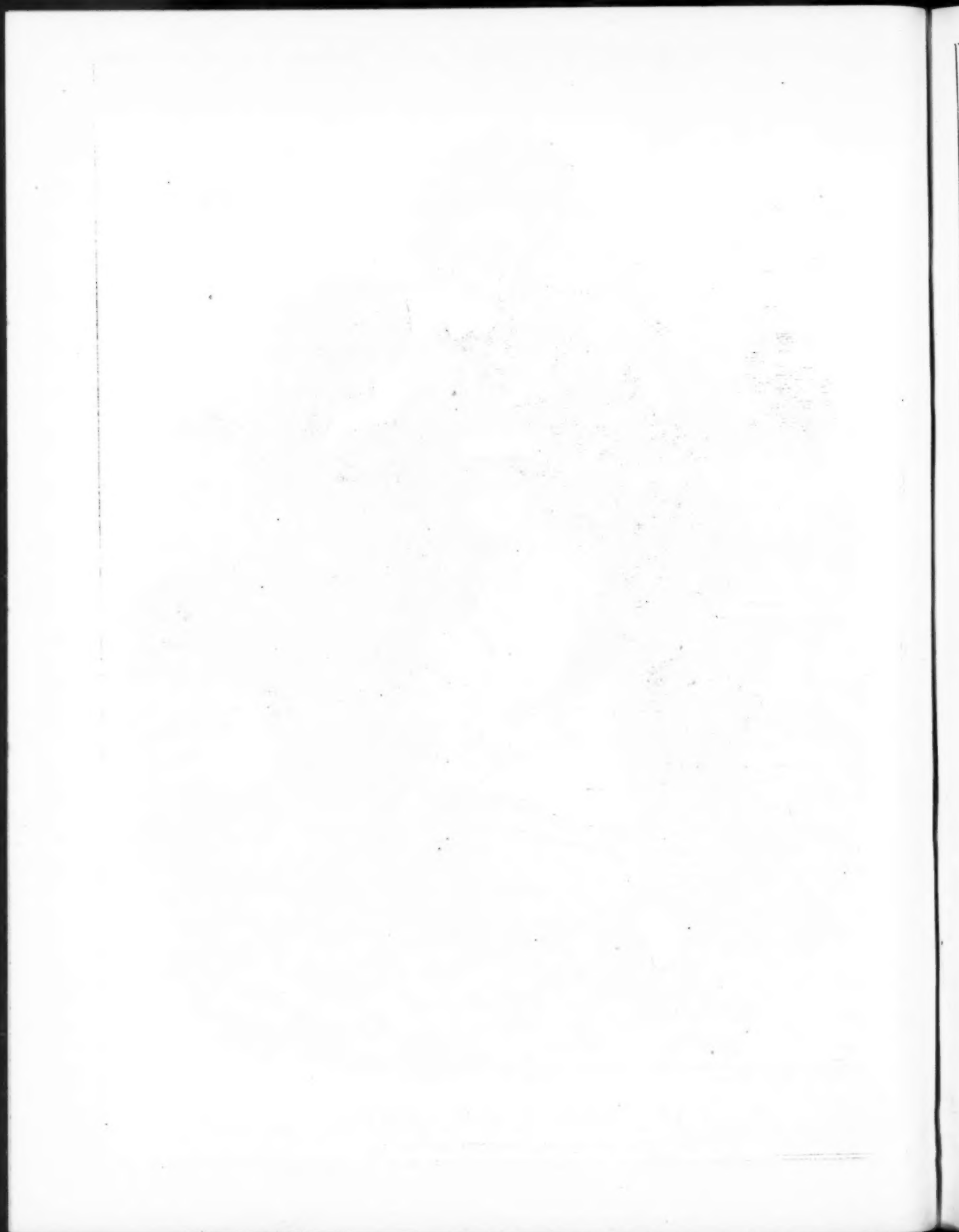
And if as I descend the aisle,
 Grown rich at last and sadly fatter,
 I catch the bland and mocking smile
 Of G.B.S., what does it matter?

I shall have won my piece of earth,
 My M.V.O., my wreath of laurel,
 Have sold my soul for what it's worth.
 They buy it. And we needn't quarrel.



IN THE DARK HOUR.

ENGLAND TO ITALY, DECEMBER 28TH, 1908.



CHARIVARIA.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE'S statement that those who eat plum-pudding ought to give three cheers for Free Trade has been successfully challenged with the argument that many of the ingredients are taxed; and those Free Traders who suffered from indigestion on the 25th or 26th ult. now know the reason why. **

"Who invented Christmas Carols?" asks *T.P.'s Weekly*. We agree that an attempt ought to be made to fix the responsibility. **

During the blizzard a train from Waverley for King's Cross was snowed up at East Linton. It now transpires that one of the passengers was Lord DALMENY. We are sure the snow could not have known this. **

"Old Moore" predicts that 1909 will be a "red year." If this refers to noses, it seems likely (at the time of writing) that the prophet will score a success. **

By the by, we are sorry to hear that the sale of Comic Noses during the festive season led to one or two regrettable incidents, owing to real noses being mistaken for the imitation article. **

It is rumoured from Africa that all the leading wild animals there are arranging a great Marathon Race in the opposite direction for the day of President ROOSEVELT'S arrival. **

President CASTRO declares that he will not prevent the new Venezuelan Government from settling outstanding disputes with foreign Powers. This generous undertaking shows him to be a good fellow at heart. **

The statement that JOHNSON bears no marks of his great fight with BURNS is denied. According to our information he is black all over. **

"SIX UNBRIABLE COUNCILLORS. ASTOUNDING STORY FROM AMERICA." So says *The Daily Graphic*. Is this quite kind and cousinly? **

"Boss" CROKER has been interviewed

by a representative of *The New York Herald*. We give two extracts:—

(1) "Every young man," he said, "should take an interest in politics." "And art and literature?" asked the interviewer. "I suppose so," said Mr. Croker, "although I don't suppose that pays much."

(2) "I would not be a Member of the British Parliament even if they were to make me President of England," he said. "No one can make anything but an American out of me."

Personally, we don't want to make anything out of Mr. CROKER, but we do appreciate his childlike candour.

We learn that one of the Women's Suffrage militants was employed while in prison in making men's shirts. The temptation to leave a needle in each must have been almost irresistible. **

The Vicar of Southbank refused last week to preach a sermon because, he declared, he was annoyed persistently by a member of the congregation. It is now rumoured that the last-mentioned gentleman has received several flattering offers from other congregations to visit their parishes. **

The following lines, which we venture to cull from a story in *The Sphere*, would seem to show how important it is to look before you sit:—"As he paused an instant half-way up the stairs, his eye caught in the reflected light of the street lamp, lying carelessly where it had been thrown on the window seat, the outlines of a magnificent party wrap with its sable collarette." **

"What is a Mining Royalty?" asks a correspondent. Well, we suppose that the plutocrat who is known as The Coal King is one. **

A gentleman writes to *The Express* to point out that the thermometer which formerly stood under the clock at the Marble Arch has not yet been replaced. We understand that it is not intended to replace it, the authorities being utterly ashamed of the vagaries of our weather. **

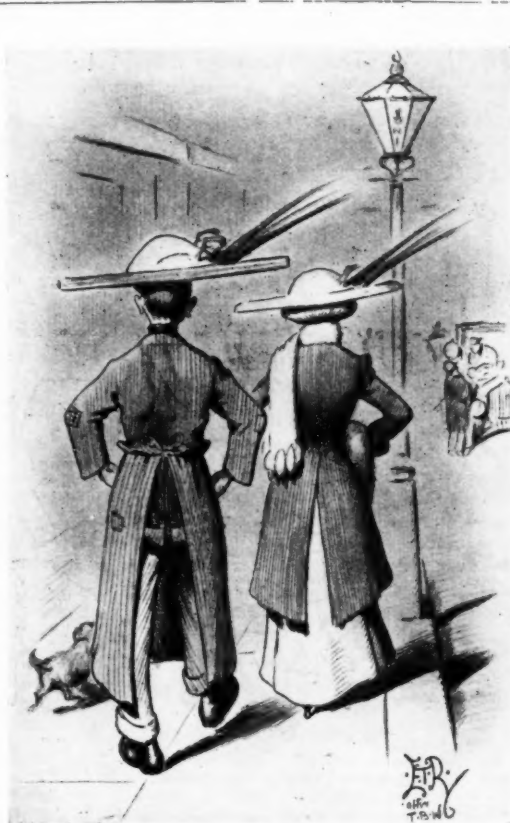
"His [BISMARCK'S] disciples have at times used the threat of war as a card in the game, but they have never ventured to let the cannon speak."

This is from an article in *The Daily Mail Year Book* called "The Chess Board of Europe." France, we may add

in the same metaphor, has often threatened to lay a stymie, but has never yet ventured to huff Germany for giving a miss in baulk. Hence the score remains at a try all.

"Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., on Saturday paid a second visit to Poplar Workhouse and sang 'The Rocky Road to Dublin' to the inmates. The hon. Member was accompanied by Mrs. Crooks, his son and daughter, and other members of his family."—*Daily Chronicle*.

There was going to be no mistake at the piano this time.



UNCONSCIOUS PLAGIARISM.

A Case of "Mimicry" in Natural History recently observed in the London streets.

It was announced last week at Truro that a number of militant Suffragettes would address a meeting in Victoria Square; but none turned up. Cabinet Ministers are now complaining bitterly that they have never been the victims of a cruel hoax of this kind. **

Among those who attended a recent At Home of the London Society for Women's Suffrage was Signora CARLOTTA DA CONTO CARDEGA, who possesses 80 votes in Madeira. This should be one of the Blessed Islands where good Suffragettes go when they die. **



MODERN SPORT.

Old-fashioned Sportsman (to new Hunt Secretary going home). "WHAT KIND OF A DAY HAVE YOU HAD?"
Secretary (thinking of the "Cap"). "WRETCHED! WORST I'VE HAD SO FAR. ONLY TEN POUNDS."

wouldn't mind the extra stamp a bit, and he would think it was the nicest pillar-box he had ever seen."

"Two," said Margy. "The third would be from him, saying what a lucky man he was, and what a sweet girl Phyllis was, and might he come to England to see Phyllis's mother, and Phyllis said if he did he would fall more in love with her than he was with her, and what a sweet girl Phyllis was, and what a lucky man he was."

"The fourth would be from the aunt, telling Phyllis's mother all about his family, with just a post-script to say how glad Phyllis's mother will be, and what a blow it will be to lose her daughter."

"The fifth would be from the uncle, with just a few words about the financial position and all the rest about his cold."

"Whose cold?" I asked.

"The uncle's, of course. I suppose Phyllis's mother will write to Phyllis, saying she cannot bear the idea of losing her. . . ."

"Having sent her out for no other purpose!"

" . . . and though she doesn't want to spoil Phyllis's happiness

she cannot promise anything yet. Then she will write to him a letter, more kind than enthusiastic, saying what a treasure Phyllis is, and that she does not know whether she can see her way to parting with her daughter."

"Isn't it possible . . . ?" said I, boldly.

"No, it isn't," snapped Amy.

"Leave him alone; he is only a man. I wish he would go on overeating himself, and not interfere in things he doesn't understand. What shall we wear?"

My sisters went to tea with the De Wintons in the afternoon (with intent) and the De Wintons always sup with the Priestleys on Sunday nights. Violet Priestley is engaged to Jack Hammond, and I met Grace Hammond in town on Monday afternoon.

"I have some news for you," she said, "if you will promise not to tell a soul. I oughtn't really to tell anyone, but you are different." I did not promise anything, but that did not seem to make any difference. "Phyllis is engaged. Isn't it a good thing? Fancy if she had been

sent out all the way to Austria for nothing!"

"Or worse still to Australia!" said I.

"He is a tall dark man with a black moustache. His father is a judge, and his family is the oldest in the colony. Phyllis had written to her mother about coming home, and he went with her to post the letter. On the way back she told him what the letter was about (wasn't it clever of her?) and he proposed then and there. He has written to Phyllis's mother, and promised to settle on Phyllis . . . but I mustn't say how much. Phyllis is coming home at once, and he is going to put his farm straight and follow by the next boat. The wedding will be early in January, and immediately afterwards they are going back to America."

"Why don't they try Australia?" I suggested.

"Same thing," she said. "What do you think of it all, and what am I to wear?"

Later I met Phyllis's mother.

"They tell me," I said, "that you had five letters from Australia

yesterday. Let me congratulate you heartily."

"Thank you very much," she said. "I love letters from a distance, and it is nice to hear from one's little nephews and nieces. Five separate letters describing a children's party they had been to. But I do wish they'd tell me something about Phyllis and when she thinks of coming home."

IN SUMMER-TIME OR WINTER-TIME.

In Summer-time, in Summer time—
But that was years ago—
No day was ever long enough,
For none was ever slow.
And those who romped and frolicked then
Through every flowery day
In cheerfulness and innocence
Were like the birds at play.
The birds they had a brighter note,
The flowers a deeper glow—
But that was in the Summer-time
A hundred years ago.

In Winter-time, in Winter-time
How cheerily went the hours!
The holly then was all our joy;
We had no thought of flowers.
The holly-berries seemed to have
A brighter tint of red;
The lawn, so green in Summer days,
With whiter snow was spread;
And every cheek with health was flushed
From sporting in the snow—
But that was in the Winter-time
A hundred years ago.

In Winter-time or Summer-time
What merry songs were sung,
When every step was light as air
And every heart was young.
Then, whether robed in rustling green
Or cloaked in silent white,
The trees, the tall familiar trees,
Looked just supremely right.
But now the songs are weak and few,
And nothing seems to show
As in the old and happy days
A hundred years ago.

Too Young at Sixty-Nine.

"The Earl of Leicester, who has just celebrated his eighty-sixth birthday and who is the 'Father' of the House of Lords, is one of the most remarkable living examples of family longevity. The long period of 154 years has elapsed since his father was born, and his father was in his sixty-ninth year at the time of his birth."—*Westminster Gazette*.

But surely that cannot be regarded as a fair start?

"In the Peak district of Derbyshire the yesterday was covered to a depth of several inches."—*The Daily Chronicle*.

But, we still ask, where are the snows of yester year?

THE OLD STYLE IN THE LANE.

Peter Pan and *Pinkie* between them don't seem to have done much damage to the old stock-pantomime, if one may judge from the huge audience that sat patiently through most of the *Dick Whittington* show at Drury Lane on New Year's Eve. I cannot say what may have happened during the dinner-hour, but a great deal of patience was needed after that. The songs that I heard, topical or other, were poor stuff, the knockabout business rather tedious, and the humour of the dialogue pretty thin, except when Mr. WILKIE BARD relieved it.



THE HERO OF THE PANTOMIME.

Mr. GEORGE ALI in his great smoking feat.

I can well believe that Mr. ARTHUR COLLINS has once more surpassed himself in the splendour and costliness of his scenery and dresses, for that is what they always say; and, indeed, the aldermanic ideal was very sumptuously illustrated in the *Harbour of Gold*; but I would gladly have done with smaller crowds and a little more real dancing, in place of all that trotting and skipping through a maze of stuffy, meaningless manoeuvres.

I have nothing to say against Miss TRULY SHATTUCK, for the courage with which she carries off a name like that disarms criticism, and, after all, she did just what she was supposed to; but one longed to exchange her *Prince of Phantasia* for just a moment of *Pickle* or the *Queen of the Fairies* from His Majesty's. Mr. WILKIE BARD found a godsend in his catch-song, "She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore," which, with the assistance of a confederate in the dress-circle, he tried to make the audience learn by heart. His quiet humour was very pleasant indeed. So was that of Mr. GEORGE ALI, as *Mouser*. Ignoring the

acrobatic traditions of the pantomime cat, he gave a superb exhibition of intelligent reserve. Miss MARIE GEORGE was not given much chance for her gamineries; Miss QUEENIE LEIGHTON was harmlessly conventional as the Principal Boy; and Miss MARIE WILSON made a pretty and natural *Alice*. Those who contrived to hear her voice thought that she sang nicely. Mr. AUBREY FITZGERALD introduced some clever burlesque, but he was meant for better things and better company.

I am half afraid that I have not written with quite that lavish enthusiasm which is expected of (and usually supplied by) the critic of Drury Lane pantomime. I must try again another year.

THE INCOMPLEAT BURGLAR.

HE was at it again last night. I woke with a start, and heard him stealthily cutting a pane out of the French window downstairs. After that he crept into the house, and padded quietly about the ground-floor rooms, appropriating anything that took his fancy. Yet this morning, when I went down to breakfast, the window-pane was putted in its frame again, as neatly as if a glazier had done the job, and nothing was missing.

Strictly speaking, I suppose I ought to have gone down to attempt his capture. But I really don't know what I should have done with him if I had caught him; I am averse from bloodshed, especially in the home, and, with the policeman passing only once in twenty-four hours, there might have been some awkward delay—time which it would be difficult to fill in tactfully—before the moment for giving him into custody arrived. So, knowing by now that he always restores what he picks up, I merely lay still and listened. "It is only honest Burglar Bill," I said to myself. "Presently his better nature will gain the upper hand again, and he will go away, an erring but not a dishonest man."

Before I understood his idiosyncrasy I *did* look for him once or twice, with a poker. But the only result of this enterprise was to excite the dog, who had not heard the intruder, but joyfully welcomed the supposition that a new, a better era was dawning, and that sociability was to be extended henceforth into those dull, small hours that hang so heavily at times on one's paws. Burglar Bill evaded me altogether, and, on the whole, I am not sorry that he never came within reach of my poker.



Urchin (to friend who has gone in). "B-I-I-L! LEND US YER SKATES; YOU AIN'T USING 'EM!"

Some people say that the changing temperature of the night air can make floorboards creak, and cause staid old arm-chairs or bureaus to kick out. Perhaps; but the night air was never yet cooled that could take a pane out of a window and put it in again. People who doubt the existence of Burglar Bill are cynics, with no belief in the ultimate goodness of human nature; but for the sake of such a belief I cling to my theory of a strong, erring man whose conscience ever pricks him when the really difficult part of his job is over. I can see him doing silent battle with his evil angel in the dark rooms downstairs, the veins on his brow standing out in the intensity of the struggle. Slowly, for it means food and drink to him, he puts back the cruet-stand that he has abstracted with such patient skill from the side-board cupboard; slowly the tears trickle down his furrowed face; then, in an agony of remorse, in altogether uncontrollable agitation, he runs up

a few stairs and down again, plays one muted note on the piano—I have never been able to account for this—and so, having robbed one of nothing but sleep, passes out silently and sorrowfully into the night.

Home!

"A tramway-car at Merthyr yesterday jumped the rails and broke into the boundary wall of the Drill Hall, where it lodged."—*The Daily Mirror*.

"By counting the number of glasses between the apparition and the first glass the month in which the event required to happen will come to pass may be ascertained."—*Woman's Life*.

And so it comes about that the event required to happen is, in the case of toppers, often postponed for many years.

"Lost, Brown Purse. Finder please return Ladies' Gymnasium."

A large order. The Finder will have to do it gradually, starting on Monday with the parallel bars.

"Particularly handsome and chaste is a sugar dredger of Empire design. Also very serviceable in navy serge."—*Dundee Courier*.

In this line a more popular speciality is a milk strainer, which gives the milk that blue tint so much sought after by connoisseurs.

"The moment of time when one year quietly changes into another we all know, but the beautiful imperceptibility is less evident."

The Daily Telegraph.

How often it happens that we cannot see the imperceptible!

An Impossible Fable.

Once upon a time there was a very rich man who denied himself nothing, entertained lavishly, and lent money to all his friends.

In course of time, although he was very rich, these habits brought him to poverty.

When the friends to whom he had lent money heard that he was impoverished they rallied round him and repaid him everything.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

I AM tired of stories of the German invasion of England; of the landing at Felixstowe (is it?), and the gallant defence by the Mayor; of the rise of all the waiters (slow, easy-going men as they have seemed to me), and the advance upon Epping Forest. I wish that for a change (failing my little romance of the Sandjak invasion of Novi-bazar) somebody would give us the story of a French or an Italian raid. Nevertheless I am grateful to Mr. H. G. WELLS. *The War in the Air* (GEORGE BELL) shows us Germany once more as the aggressor; but this time it is America upon whom her double eagle eye is cast. The accounts of the air-fights do not move me much, but the adventures of the Cockney hero on Goat Island, Niagara, are thrilling. This is *Bert Smallways*, one of the great *Kipps* family, which only Mr. WELLS can draw; and he is so well done that I could have wished he had been the hero of a humbler tale. Until, that is, we got to Goat Island, when I was all for more fighting. *The War in the Air* is an immensely interesting story, well written, of course; but it seems to lack singleness of aim and so does not quite hit the mark. On the other hand it gives the reader an opportunity of deciding by the one book whether he prefers his author as a realist, romancist, or sociologist.

I find myself in a position of some delicacy. I feel certain that it is only necessary to mention the nature of Mr. W. H. MALLOCK's plot in his novel, *An Immortal Soul* (GEORGE BELL), to send him innumerable readers, and yet one cannot furnish the least hint of it without giving away enough to spoil the interest, excepting for those cautious readers who guard against shocks by taking the last chapters of a story first. But perhaps I may mention two subsidiary attractions. There is a most endearing set of people in it, and my own appreciation of them is not, let me confess, affected by the fact that one or two of them owe much to the tactfulness of their former indiscretions. And there are opened several vistas of thought which make the book a good deal bigger than its three hundred and fifty-odd pages, closely printed. If I were to try to build a sort of literary Colossus out of the many novels I have read this last year, Mr. MALLOCK's book would certainly supply the brain for the whole.

Of the making of literary *Peters* there is no end, nor does it appear that some among the older ones lose with time their power to charm. Of such is evidently *LUCAS MALET's Little Peter* (FROWDE, HODDER AND STOUGHTON), who makes his reappearance in a dainty new suit of white-and-gold, with eight most sympathetic and really illustrative pictures by CHARLES E. BROCK. It is a guise in which he will be very welcome at this holiday season. Personally, when I am given a book about a little boy who lived, once upon a time, at the edge of a dark wood, the son of poor but honest parents, and intimate with

charcoal-burners, I incline to think myself defrauded if there is not an ogre or two in the tale and a sprinkling of fairies. This, however, may be mere prejudice, and there is much in *Little Peter* to make amends. *Peter* himself, for instance, is wholly delightful. But for that very reason I object the more strongly to his end. I do not like nice little boys, especially *Peters*, to be carried away by angels in the last chapter. Children have no business with the theory that to die young is the reward of amiability. For one thing, it puts a premium on bad tempers.

Dun to Beersheba (HEINEMANN) is the happily-named title of Mr. ARCHIBALD COLQUHOUN's latest work. To the already voluminous and valuable story of the author's travels in four continents it adds records and descriptions of Burmah, Siam, Southern China, Central America and South Africa, where he made the acquaintance and gained the confidence of CECIL RHODES. The South Africa Company, under that great man's direction, was at the time engaged in annexing the vast territory now known as Rhodesia. Mr. COLQUHOUN was appointed to administrative post with promise of eventually having charge of Mashonaland. His narrative of the advance

of the Chartered Company's force, led by Mr. SELOUS and captained by Dr. JAMESON, is new and full of interest. There are few men of the present day who have journeyed so far as Mr. COLQUHOUN. Fewer still combine with the passion for travel the gift of making the reader share their pleasure, whilst escaping their privations.

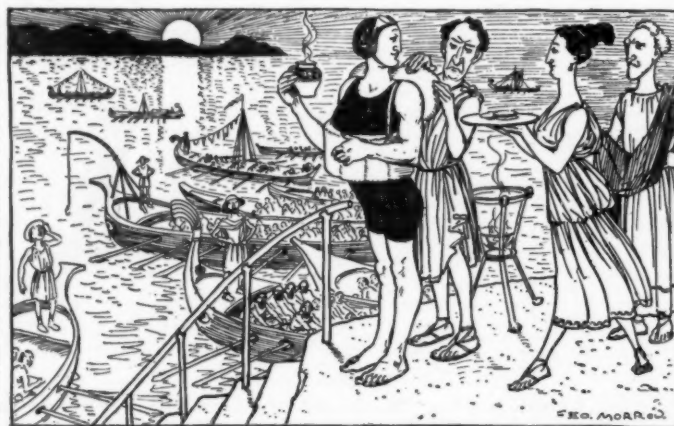
There are fairies and fairies, pixies and pigmies, good and bad, but none—according to unanimous youthful tradition—indifferent, and Lady RITCHIE's *Fairy Blackstick* in the

Blackstick Papers (SMITH, ELDER) is of the easy-going, garrulous, gossip kind, dainty and easy of movement, agile in speech, reminiscent in mood. She loves to stand meditating on Brighton Parade, that no longer neglected thoroughfare, or to muse in the windows of a house on the front, and there to call up the ghosts of past literature and dead fashions—the literature of THACKERAY, the fashions of a day rather earlier. These *Blackstick Papers*, by THACKERAY's daughter, appearing lately in the *Cornhill*, wisely avoid comparison with the *Roundabout Papers* which THACKERAY himself contributed half-a-century ago to the same magazine, then in its infancy.

Germany, according to *The Standard's* Berlin correspondent, is much exercised as to what Englishmen wear in town.

"The dispute arose at a rehearsal of the English play *Mrs. Dot*. In the first Act some men drop in to afternoon tea at five o'clock with a hostess. The question arose, What would these men wear in such circumstances in London?"

The proper costume would, of course, be a brown-coloured bathing suit, neck to knee. The L.C.C., however, does not encourage mixed bathing at the hour mentioned.

EXPLODED REPUTATIONS.—VII.
LEADER.